

After having written this act the Emperor presented it to the Marshals, saying, "Here, gentlemen! are you satisfied?"

This abdication of Napoleon was certainly very useless, but in case of anything occurring to render it a matter of importance the act might have proved entirely illusory. Its meaning might appear unequivocal to the generality of people, but not to me, who was so well initiated in the cunning to which Napoleon could resort when it suited his purpose. It is necessary to observe that Napoleon does not say that "he descends from the throne" but that "he is *ready* to descend from the throne." This was a subterfuge, by the aid of which he intended to open new negotiations respecting the form and conditions of the Regency of his son, in case of the Allied sovereigns acceding to that proposition. This would have afforded the means of gaining time.

He had not yet resigned all hope, and therefore he joyfully received a piece of intelligence communicated to him by General Allix. The General informed the Emperor that he had met an Austrian officer who was sent by Francis II. to Prince Schwartzberg, and who positively assured him that all which had taken place in Paris was contrary to the wish of the Emperor of Austria. That this may have been the opinion of the officer is possible, and even probable. But it is certain from the issue of a mission of the Duke de Cadore (Champagny), of which I shall presently speak, that the officer expressed merely his own personal opinion. However, as soon as General Allix had communicated this good news, as he termed it, to Napoleon, the latter exclaimed to the persons who were about him, "I told you so, gentlemen. Francis II. cannot carry his enmity so far as to dethrone his daughter. Yicenza, go and desire the Marshals to return my act of abdication. I will send a courier to the Emperor of Austria."

Thus Bonaparte in his shipwreck looked round for a saving plank, and tried to nurse himself in illusions. The Duke of Vicenza went to Marshals Key and Macdonald, whom he found just stepping into a carriage to proceed to Paris. Both